

The Library Assistant :

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ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The next meeting of the Association will be held on **Wednesday, 12th May, 7.30 p.m.**, at the **CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY, HIGH STREET, BROMLEY (Kent)**, when the two following papers will be read:—

“Modern Work in Modern Libraries,” by **WILLIAM J. HARRIS**, *Borough Librarian of Islington*.

“Special Reference Work and the Municipal Reference Library,” by **WYNDHAM MORGAN**, *Cardiff Public Libraries; Chairman of the South Wales Branch of the L.A.A.*

Mr. COUNCILLOR WELLER, Chairman of the Libraries Committee, will preside.

NOTE.—At this meeting two auditors will be elected to audit the Association's accounts. Nominations may be handed in to the Hon. Secretary at the meeting.

It is hoped that members will make a special effort to be present on this occasion, when an opportunity will be afforded of examining one of the most up-to-date and go-ahead libraries round London. Extension work in all its different ramifications has been a feature of this library for years, and its working principles present much worthy of careful study. The two papers are of particular interest, and the meeting in all respects promises to be one which every member should make a point of not missing.

The visit to Bromley gives an opportunity for a ramble in the Garden of England, seen at its best in May. Several members have already signified their intention of taking advantage of this opportunity, and those who would like to join them should notify the Honorary Secretary twenty-four hours before the meeting. Meet at the Library at 3.15.

TWENTIETH ANNUAL MEETING.

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT.

The TWENTIETH ANNUAL MEETING will be held in LONDON *probably* on **Wednesday, 23rd June**. The proceedings will include an address by the incoming President, the adoption of the Annual Report and the usual business items. Full details will appear in the next issue of the *Library Assistant*.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COUNCIL.

THE ANNUAL ELECTION of OFFICERS AND COUNCIL takes place in June. Nominations must be sent to the Hon. Secretary, NOT LATER than MIDNIGHT, **18th May, 1915**. Nominations are required for President (who must be a London Fellow, Member, or Associate), Vice-President (who must be a non-London Fellow, Member, or Associate), Treasurer, Secretary, and ten London and ten non-London members of any grade.

NORTH WESTERN BRANCH.

JUNE MEETING.

The next meeting of the North Western Branch of the Library Assistants' Association, will be held (by the kind invitation of the Public Libraries Committee) in the MAYOR'S DINING ROOM, TOWN HALL, BOLTON, on **Wednesday, June 2nd**, at **6.30 p.m.**

Meeting of the Committee at the Central Reference Library, Victoria Square, at 5.30 p.m.

The following programme has been arranged :—

1. Welcome, by ARCHIBALD SPARKE, Esq., F.R.S.L., Chief Librarian, Bolton Public Libraries.
2. Reading of Papers.
 - (a) "Revival of Printing." Illustrated by Private Press books in the Central Reference Library, Bolton, by Mr. T. W. WRIGHT, Assistant-in-Charge, Central Reference Library, Bolton.
 - (b) "Form Classification," by Mr. H. HAMER, Senior Assistant, Central Reference Library, Bolton.
 - (c) "Papers for Book Production," by Mr. J. L. DAVISON, Assistant-in-Charge, Astley Bridge Branch Library, Bolton.

3. Discussion. The above three papers will be short, and the remainder of the evening will be given up to discussion.

NOTE.—Assistants wishing to inspect the Branch Libraries during the afternoon are requested to notify Mr. Sparke of the time of their arrival. Arrangements will then be made for Bolton members to meet them at the Central Reference Library and conduct them to the various branches.

A cordial invitation is extended to all assistants in the North Western Area, and those intending to be present at the meeting are requested to notify Mr. Sparke, not later than Saturday, May 29th.

Tea and coffee will be served in the Mayor's Dining Room, Town Hall, from 6—6.30 p.m., by the kindness of his Worship the Mayor, Alderman James Seddon.

BOLTON PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

The Bolton Public Libraries consist of Central Lending and Reference Libraries (in separate buildings), six branches, and thirteen school libraries. A feature of the Branch Libraries is the special accommodation made for women and children, separate rooms and periodicals being provided. The stock is roughly 135,000 volumes, the number of borrowers over 30,000, and the issues last year amounted to over half a million. The Central Reference Library contains 30,000 volumes, being strong in Fine Arts, Natural History, Private Press Books, etc. The Reference Library also contains a local collection of over 1,000 books, the catalogue of which, "Bibliographia Boltoniensis," is considered to be a model. The annual income is about £7,000, of which sum £6,600 is the proceeds of a 2d. rate.

CENTRAL IRISH BRANCH.

The next meeting of the Central Irish Branch will be held on WEDNESDAY, MAY 12th. A discussion will be opened by Mr. JOHN DE WITT HINCH on "The Hours, &c., of Library Assistants."

SOUTH COAST BRANCH.

The Hon. Secretary is prepared to receive NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE for the ensuing year. All the present officers and members of Committee are eligible, and offer themselves for re-election. Nominations should be addressed to the undersigned, and must arrive *not later than* TUESDAY, MAY 25th.

A prize of One Guinea has been offered by Mr. Henry D. Roberts, Director, Public Library, etc., Brighton, for the best essay on "THE IDEAL PUBLIC LIBRARY; from a Ratepayer's Point of View." The competition is open to all members of the Branch. The last date for the sending in of essays will be announced in next month's *Assistant*.

ARTHUR WERR, *Hon. Secretary*
Public Library, Brighton.

EDITORIAL.

A Personal Note.—The Hon. Secretary would like to thank all those who have, in very generous terms, welcomed him to the office vacated by Mr. Sayers. In the difficult task of attempting to continue the high standard of work set by Mr. Sayers, he pleads the patience and indulgence of all members, and hopes too much will not be expected. He also trusts he may receive the unstinted support and co-operation of all having an interest in the Association's progress; unaided, his efforts are not likely to achieve much, but with the sympathetic assistance of the many a great deal may be accomplished. A severe testing-time for the Association is ahead, and the success which has been so characteristic of its recent history can only be maintained by every individual member doing his or her best in its interests at every opportunity. The new Hon. Secretary, therefore, looks confidently forward to continued vigorous activity by every member on behalf of the Association as well as of librarianship generally; in striving after the advantage of the whole body the individual reaps his own reward. New members and visitors are asked to introduce themselves to the Hon. Secretary in order that he may have an opportunity for making them acquainted with other members, but possessing a memory which usually fails in its functions where names are concerned, he hopes any mistakes in this direction will not be attributed to lack of courtesy!

W.B.T.

Our New Honorary Librarian.—We desire to draw the attention of members to the new arrangement by which Miss Constance Mitchell assumes control of the Association Library, which will continue to be housed at the Central Islington Library, of which staff Miss Mitchell is a member. In the past, Miss Mitchell has rendered valuable assistance to Miss Olive E. Clarke, the late Honorary Librarian. We are gratified that Miss Mitchell finds it possible to continue her association with our Library, and to assume the increased responsibility. That courtesy and consideration which distinguishes the attitude of members towards officers of the L.A.A., we confidently anticipate, will be accorded to our new Honorary Librarian.

A Loss to Librarianship.—Grim visaged war has claimed a personality we could ill afford to lose in Mr. W. G. C. Gladstone. It is a bitter commentary on the ill fortune which has persistently dogged the steps of the Library Association in its efforts to remove the rate limitation, that war should claim as almost its first House of Commons victim, the sponsor of the Public Libraries Bill. The loss is intensified when it is remembered

that the very practical loyalty and earnestness which marked Mr Gladstone's action in responding so readily to his country's call, augured so well for the successful termination of a long deferred hope. But international work and comity are forgotten; German kultur demands its price, and a German bullet cut short for ever the career of one in whom our hopes were centred.

THE MARRIAGE OF MR. W. C. BERWICK SAYERS AND
MISS OLIVE E. CLARKE.

The marriage of Mr. Sayers and Miss Olive E. Clarke will take place at Muswell Hill, on May 22nd. Owing to a recent bereavement in the bride's family (and also to the fact that both of the bridegroom's brothers are abroad on active service) the guests will be limited to the two families. Our friends ask us (with much regret) to offer this reason why their many friends in the L.A.A. have not been invited to be present.

CLASSIFICATION AND THE PUBLIC.

By F. W. C. PEPPER, Reference Library, Birmingham.

The scientific classification of books, which looms so largely in modern library practice, is an accepted fact in any library system with pretensions to being up-to-date. Controversy as to its value has become a thing of the past, and in its place we get criticisms of the various existing schemes—with the inevitable suggested "improvements," discussions of the problems of their application, and so on. This is a healthy attitude, for it denotes progress. There is one aspect of classification, however, which does not seem to have received the attention it merits, and that is, the public standpoint.

Superficially this may seem a detail, and it may be urged that the public is indifferent to the classification so long as its needs are supplied. This is true to a certain extent, but when the reader comes into contact with the classification, either by access to the shelves or through the medium of a classified catalogue, he is no longer indifferent, but needs a guide or clue to the sequence. The catalogue being compact and indexed is easily mastered (presuming the reader to be a patient individual), but though we label and guide the shelves until it is as easy to find the book required as the right label, we cannot familiarise the public with the sequence—simply because it is not a popular sequence. This difficulty was one of the strong points of the now happily obsolete opponents of open access, and if we consider

that it takes an assistant months of study and practical application to thoroughly master a system of classification, we can realise better what a task we are imposing upon the public in this respect. It may not be essential for readers to understand the classification, but it is obviously desirable. At present, users of an open access library at first either wander round the shelves until they find a book to their taste or, by luck or enquiry, find the subject they require; afterwards, remembrance of location is their leading guide.

To eliminate or modify this unsatisfactory state of affairs, we have the alternatives of either simplifying the classification or providing more efficient guides. The first is worthy of consideration. The development of modern classification tends towards scientific precision and more minute subdivision, thus making the system more complicated and extending the notation to a formidable length. The public comprehension is difficult to gauge, but, without any disrespect for the British public, it is safer to underestimate it. By simplifying our classification we shall bring it within the comprehension of the "man in the street" without causing any serious disadvantage to the intellectuals.

The order of modern classification is avowedly more or less philosophical, and though it is perhaps rather late in the day to question the wisdom of this, it is as well to bear in mind that bibliographical classification can never be more than a compromise between a philosophical order and that which the books necessitate. Furthermore, such an order as already stated, is incomprehensible to the public, and considering the rapid growth of the open access system, this is an important point. To simplify book classification we must have an order familiar to the public. It is a simple matter to talk airily of "educating them up to it," but readers do not want a lesson in classification when they come to the library, and it is unreasonable to expect them to study the schedules and labels which adorn the average "up-to-date" library. Without reverting to the time-worn arguments of the dictionary versus classified catalogue controversy, it is indisputable that an alphabetical sequence is the most simple and popular. A pure alphabetical arrangement of subjects is not desirable, but much might be done in this direction.

Dewey himself favours such alphabetisation for what he terms "final subdivisions," and states that "we never hesitate to use the alphabet wherever that is more useful," and as an example shows how metals may be alphabetised under Inorganic Chemistry. To decide where alphabetisation is "more useful" may seem a difficult matter, but as a general rule it may be laid down that where there is little or nothing to be gained by a

philosophical order or where such an order can hardly be said to exist, an alphabetical arrangement is to be preferred.

The order of the main classes, which has long been a debatable question, might easily be settled by alphabetisation. Whether a classification should commence with Philosophy or Religion is a question for philosophers and theologians to argue about; it should not trouble the librarian, whose only concern is to get his subjects in a convenient order. If we alphabetise the main classes of Dewey, leaving General Works at the commencement, we get the following result :—

Arts, Fine
Arts, Useful
History
Language
Literature
Natural Science
Philosophy
Religion
Sociology

Such an order makes no pretensions to relativity, but little would be lost by this. On the other hand, the public would gain by being able to at once grasp the order of the main classes. The same applies to the subdivision of the main classes. Take Useful Arts for example. Alphabetising Dewey again we get :—

Agriculture
Building Construction
Chemical Technology
Communication
Domestic Economy
Engineering
Manufacture
Mechanic Trades
Medicine

The enthusiast for a natural order may point out that Mechanic Trades does not lead up to Medicine, which is true, but at the same time neither does Medicine lead up to Engineering. The order of Dewey's divisions of Useful Arts—Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture, etc.—cannot be defended as being either relative or particularly convenient, yet in practice the arrangement does not cause any difficulty. Similarly the separation of Literature and Language, Sociology and History, which may be termed cognate subjects, does not cause any serious disadvantage and examples like these, which might be multiplied, go to prove that the philosophical order of main subjects is not important. Alphabetisation could be applied to the smallest subdivision and

wherever the lack of relativity would not be an obvious disadvantage. In short, what is advocated is a compromise between an alphabetical and a natural order, maintaining where desirable, the logical division of genera into species, but where possible alphabetising the genera or main subjects and in turn alphabetising the species or divisions of a subject.

The lengthy notations which cause misgivings among librarians could also be reduced in this way, for where an alphabetical subdivision is used, the notation need not be carried out as the sequence would be self explanatory. It is even possible to discard a notation altogether and in place of the complex string of numbers or letters on the back of a book, the subject could be lettered to maintain the order.

To compile such a scheme would doubtless be a very difficult task, but a well balanced compromise as suggested would certainly find more favour with the public if not with the profession, and the experiment seems worth trying. Much has been done in recent years to remove the pettifogging hindrances and obstacles which were placed in the way of a would-be borrower of the last century, but much remains to be done. Those awesome columns of numbers called indicators are going, and we are throwing our shelves open to the public, which is the finest movement the profession has yet seen, and it is now up to us to make readers at home among the shelves.

The introduction of the open access system made it imperative that the books should be classified, with the result that a mere haphazard grouping had to be changed into an orderly arrangement whereby readers could find in one place books relating to a particular subject. This has been accomplished, but we have made it difficult for readers to find their subjects, and it is submitted that our present classifications are a barrier between readers and their requirements. True, they have but to ask to be directed to the right shelf, or by dint of perseverance they may find it themselves, but the latter is a lengthy process for the uninitiated. The utility of a relative order has probably been over estimated. The idea of subjects modulating one into the other makes a strong appeal, but it has not proved practicable. The explanation of this is that what is relative to one person is not to another. The student of Book Production, for example, will regard Paper Manufacture, Printing, Bookbinding, etc., as relative subjects; the bookbinder will be indifferent to Printing, but might claim Leather Manufacture as a relative subject, and so on. Obviously we cannot arrange subjects to suit every profession or trade, and it is fairly safe to say that very few will find what each regard as relative

subjects grouped together. The electrician must go to Physics, the gardener to Botany, and a multitude of such examples might be given. Does it seem worth while to continue this complicated order, when we must admit that the ideal we have set before us is impracticable? It would be much easier for readers to find their relative subjects in an alphabetical sequence, than by the present method of discovering the number given to a particular subject, and then following the notation round the shelves.

Under existing classifications endeavours have been made to facilitate the finding of books by readers, mainly by means of framed schedules attached to the ends of the bookcases to denote their contents, and by various appliances scattered round the shelves bearing labels giving main subjects. In many libraries these guides have been carried to excess, and not only disfigure the library, but defeat their own purpose.

If the suggestion for an alphabetical classification is not acceptable (as it may be urged), attention should be paid to this difficulty which the public find in our classification. We can continue labelling *ad lib.*, but this does not help materially. In large open access libraries there is need for a new position akin to that of a shopwalker in a large business establishment, the duties of such a position being solely to guide readers. The possibilities attached to the post are interesting, for with the right man filling it, he could act not merely as a guide to the shelves, but as a guide to reading, and such personal guidance would be more helpful and more likely to be followed than the guidance presented through annotations or reading lists. In the smaller libraries, where the income or issues are not sufficient to warrant the creation of such a position, this work should be undertaken by the senior members of the staff. Something is already done in this direction, of course, but not half enough. With the senior staff engaged in other duties, and the juniors kept busy with counter work and details of routine, this is not surprising, but some better provision should be made. If it is not possible to introduce the shopwalker into the library, a senior assistant should be engaged in this duty during the busiest times of the day. Apart from the benefit which the public would derive from such guidance, the personal contact between readers and the staff is a matter of far-reaching importance, and if librarians and their assistants rose to the occasion it would do much to heighten the prestige of public libraries.

In conclusion, it is well always to bear in mind that the library exists for the public, and that the end of library economy is to enable the public to get the best out of the library. It should not be necessary to remind the profession of this, but in

treating of technical subjects there is a tendency to lose sight of this. In all departments of our work the public standpoint should be the first consideration, for in an honest endeavour

"To see oursel's as others see us
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
And foolish notion."

PROCEEDINGS.

APRIL JOINT MEETING.

The second joint meeting of the L.A. and the L.A.A. took place on Wednesday evening, the 14th April, at Bishopsgate Institute. Prior to the meeting light refreshments were served and members and friends numbering about sixty, availed themselves of the opportunity of inspecting the collection of prints arranged to illustrate the subject of Mr. Goss's paper. The fine organ installed in the large hall of the Institute was impressed into the evening's proceedings, and the judicious use of the soft pedal materially added to the enjoyment of those present.

The preliminary business, as far as the L.A.A. was concerned, consisted of the election of two new London members of the Council. There were three nominations: Miss R. Duménil (Hackney), who received 19 votes; Mr. R. F. Bullen (Poplar), who received 17 votes; and Mr. R. Cooper (Battersea), who received 15 votes. The first two were therefore declared duly elected.

Mr. FRANK PACY, Chief Librarian, Westminster Public Libraries, was installed in the chair and immediately called upon the respective Hon. Secretaries to read the minutes of the last meetings of the two Associations. Following upon a resolution of congratulation to Mr. W. C. Berwick Sayers on his appointment to Wallasey, unanimously carried by the members of the Library Association, the Chairman called upon Mr. C. W. F. GOSS to read his paper on: PRINTS, METHODS OF PRODUCTION AND PRESERVATION.

Mr. GOSS commenced his paper with a brief historical retrospect of the art of engraving, which was supposed to have been known to the Chinese as early as the 11th Century, B.C. Wood engraving dated from 1825 A.D., and it was not until the latter part of the 18th century that metal began to be universally used. The speaker here described the processes in wood and metal engraving, and showed the preparation and various conditions of the plate and the tools used in working. The different methods of engraving were described: Etching, Mezzotint, Line Engraving, etc., and prints were exhibited to show the various

stages of proofs. Colour printing was but cursorily dealt with, the exceptions being a brief reference to the Baxter process and the opportunity afforded to the speaker of voicing his detestation of the modern colour book. Mr. Goss concluded his paper with a brief account of the method of mounting prints as adopted at the Bishopsgate Institute.

The CHAIRMAN moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Goss, the late hour precluding a discussion of the paper. In reply, Mr. Goss declared his indebtedness to Mr. Herbert Jones, Librarian of Kensington, for the loan of some tools and plates for exhibition purposes, and also to various other persons. This concluded the evening's proceedings.

MIDLAND BRANCH.

ANNUAL MEETING AND REPORT.

THE FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING of the Midland Branch was held at Birmingham on Wednesday, March 10th, when there were present: The Hon. President (Mr. Walter Powell), and fourteen members and friends.

Assembling at the Central Library, Ratcliff Place, at 3.15 p.m., the party proceeded to the printing establishment of Messrs. The Birmingham Printers, Ltd., Hill Street, where they were cordially welcomed by the manager, Mr. Frank H. Bruff, who described the co-operative system on which the business is worked, and to which he attributed the success of the undertaking.

In their tour of the works members of the Branch were much interested in the monotype machines, the processes of stereotyping, ruling, binding, and other details incidental to an up-to-date printing works, and were no less impressed by the establishment as a model of factory organisation.

On the motion of THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. H. Grindle) a hearty vote of thanks was accorded Mr. Bruff and his directors for the kindness and courtesy with which the party had been received.

Leaving the printing works, a visit was next paid to the Aston Branch Library, where an exhibition of rare and notable books from the Reference Department bore eloquent testimony to the genius of Mr. R. K. Dent, the Librarian of Aston from its foundation until 1911, when the district was incorporated with the city of Birmingham.

In the Council Chamber adjoining members and friends were afterwards entertained to tea by the HON. PRESIDENT (Mr. Walter Powell). During a short interval after tea a meeting of the Committee of the Branch was held, while other members were free to inspect the library and more of its fine books.

The evening meeting was notable for the presence of several of the senior members of the Birmingham staff, who were attending for the first time a meeting of the Branch.

In opening the proceedings THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. Grindle) referred to the absence of some of their most prominent members, including the first chairman of the branch (Mr. H. W. Checketts) and the Hon. Secretary (Mr. F. J. Patrick), who were away serving with the colours. In the absence of the Hon. Secretary the Chairman read a report on the work of the Branch during the year.

The Hon. Treasurer (Mr. H. Woodbine) then presented the balance sheet, which was received and adopted.

The following Officers and Committee were then elected:—

Honorary President: Mr. WALTER POWELL, Chief Librarian, Birmingham.

Honorary Vice-Presidents: Mr. R. K. DENT, late Librarian of Aston; Dr. J. RENDEL HARRIS, Principal of the Woodbrooke Settlement; Mr. ALFRED MORGAN, Librarian, Walsall; Mr. F. C. MORGAN, Librarian, Malvern; Mr. S. A. PITT, Chief Librarian, Glasgow.

Chairman: Mr. H. M. CASHMORE, Deputy Librarian, Birmingham.

Honorary Secretary: Mr. H. GRINDLE.

Honorary Treasurer: Mr. H. WOODBINE.

Honorary Auditor: Mr. G. L. BURTON.

Committee: Messrs. A. J. AVERY, Birmingham; R. FENLEY, Rugby; M. C. HUNT, Birmingham; F. W. C. PEPPER, Birmingham; and J. SIDWELL, Coventry.

On the motion of Mr. H. M. Cashmore (Deputy Librarian of Birmingham) the Committee were authorised to deal with the question of the proposed Annual Meeting of the L.A.A. in Birmingham during the present year.

THE CHAIRMAN (Mr. H. M. Cashmore), whose accession to the Chairmanship was received with applause, after briefly expressing his thanks for the honour accorded him, then called upon the HONORARY PRESIDENT to deliver his address on "BOOK SELECTION," an address which was followed with the closest attention.

Mr. Powell said the subject which he had chosen was one of supreme importance among the many and miscellaneous duties which librarians were called upon to perform. Unfortunately, it did not always receive the full amount of attention it deserved, possibly because it was one which could be postponed to the last minute. It was easily possible to prepare a scratch list from the publications of the day which might seem good to a committee or even to a superior officer, but which might not be good

for the library concerned, because it was not good in relation to the existing stock. The foundation of a library consisted of those enduring works which could never become superseded. In the term "book selection," he included not only additions, but also removals, as removals implied the selection of those works which were to remain. In the case of a reference library, it should be borne in mind that works once added were there for all time. Consequently only works of sterling merit should be admitted. With lending libraries the case was somewhat different, as books of more transient interest fully justified their purchase because of the immediate call for them, after which they could be removed in favour of later works. For success in the difficult art of book selection the first and indispensable requisite was sound literary knowledge, not only of the entire field of English literature, but also of the standard writers in the principal European languages. Such knowledge was essential, but this alone was not sufficient. Acquaintance with literature, however extensive or profound, even when coupled with excellent judgment, did not guarantee success in book selection, else there would be less need for the qualified librarian. Like other experts, the qualified librarian must be expert in the use of tools, which in his case were bibliographies, and it was in knowledge and adroit use of these that the expert librarian excelled. The first step for all assistants was the Library Association course in bibliography, which would make clear the main lines to be followed. There was not only the question of the best books, but there was the important question of the best available or most suitable editions of such works, and in this bibliographical aids were indispensable. The great editions published in their own time, such, for instance, as that of Ruskin, or the recently completed edition of William Morris, could hardly be overlooked, but the case was different with many famous editions of old works, works, he would add, which could not always be collated from internal evidence alone. Mr. Powell illustrated this portion of his address by reference to several concrete examples, citing various editions of Dugdale's "Warwickshire," Lavater's "Physiognomy," and other works. The science of bibliography had not, unfortunately, been carried to its highest level in England, the standard work (Lowndes) being useful but inaccurate. In this science we had been excelled by the French, who had produced some of the greatest bibliographers, among whom the celebrated Brunet called for notice.

Mr. Powell also laid special emphasis on the bibliographies and lists of authorities with which so many books were now happily provided.

The general policy, therefore, in book selection, must be a good solid groundwork of enduring works in good editions, attention being paid to local industries, and local requirements, with, if possible, some special collection in addition to the necessary local collection.

As to the selection of modern works, much depended upon the judgment of the librarian. Reviews were often entirely misleading, and it seemed, generally speaking, that at the present moment English reviewing was under a cloud. Frequently the publisher's name was a far better guide than a review, and it was gratifying to know that there were several British houses whose imprint was in itself a guarantee of worth. Unfortunately, there were others whose names did not inspire confidence. In this connection Mr. Powell warned his hearers against the craze for books in series, which often began well, achieved an immediate success, but which were too frequently continued with long strings of works best described as "scissors and paste." Books should be selected for their intrinsic merit alone, and not because they formed part of a series.

Continuing, Mr. Powell said there was another aspect of book selection. In many collections of books the personal equation was too evident. Catholicity, the adequate representation of little used subjects, and the balance between the various sections, should be the ideals ever present in their minds. There was the unescapable question of cost. With the means at their disposal they had to do the best they could, but it was a grievous mistake to think that the cheap and ephemeral production could ever become a substitute for the costly and authoritative work. It was better to have one book of real value than a dozen because they were low-priced. Much might be done by watching the remainder lists, but here again, in quest of bargains, they ran the risk of adding works which were condemned by the diminished price at which they were offered. No book should be bought simply because it could be got at a fraction of its original price. Indeed, its low price was often an indication of its entire unsuitability.

Concluding, Mr. Powell expressed the hope that the various points he had been able to touch upon would be fully discussed by the meeting.

Speeches were then made by Messrs. AVERY, DIXON, GREAVES, PHILLIPS, WILSON, and WOODBINE, and Mr. Powell was accorded the best thanks of the meeting for his generous hospitality, and for his able and interesting address.

HARRY GRINDLE,
Hon. Secretary.

L.A.A. ROLL OF HONOUR.

Glasgow: H. HUTCHESON (Lce.-Cpl., The Cameronians Scottish Rifles, 5th Batt.), A. PATERSON (Lanarkshire Yeomanry, J. McSKIMMING (Highland Light Infantry, 16th Service Batt.), D. KENNEDY (Highland Light Infantry, 16th Service Batt.), T. BROWN (The Cameronians Scottish Rifles, 5th Batt.), J. JOHNSTONE (Queen's Own Royal Glasgow Yeomanry), D. MACLEOD (The Cameronians Scottish Rifles, 5th Batt.), B. DEIGHAN (The Cameronians Scottish Rifles, 5th Batt.), W. McDONALD (Highland Light Infantry, 7th Blythswood Batt.), D. YOUNGER (Highland Light Infantry, 7th Blythswood Batt.), W. ANDERSON (Highland Light Infantry, 9th Glasgow Highland Batt.).

Norwich: *F. F. BUSSEY (Pioneer, 38th Signalling Co. Royal Engineers).

Sheffield: A. BURTON (King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry), J.C. HOBSON and F. KELLINGTON (both Sheffield City Reserve Batt. Yorks. and Lancs. Regt.).

Tottenham: *H. ELLIS (7th Middlesex Regt.).

*Member, L.A.A.

CORRECTION.

ELLISON, J. B., given as **Leeds** in *The Assistant* last month, should have been as of **Oldham Lyceum**.

OUR LIBRARY.

OPEN ACCESS LIBRARIES: Their Planning, Equipment and Organisation.—By James D. Stewart, Olive E. Clarke, Henry T. Coutts, Alice Jones, and William McGill. Planned with an Introduction, by James Duff Brown. 223 pp. 7-in. x 5-in. Cloth. 1915. Grafton & Co. 7s. 6d. net.

The last decade has seen a wonderful advance in the provision of text books on library economy. Whereas 10 years ago the issuing of a new text book was an event of the first magnitude, today such an event is regarded in quite a matter-of-fact spirit. The last, however, is *not* always least, and certainly the qualification does not apply to the volume before us, which represents the sum of ripe experience in a system which its opponents will admit has long since passed the experimental stage. We would suggest to the prospective reader that Appendix C, "A plea for Liberty," by Mr. James Duff Brown, reprinted from vol 4 of *The Library* (1892), be read before proceeding to assimilate the book proper, for by so doing ideas as to the great difference between modern methods and those of 20 years ago, will assume their due perspective. Some of our older members will remember

the controversy raised by that "Plea"; the friendships embittered and the splitting of the whole profession into open access advocates and the opponents of a system regarded by them as rooted in the violation of the sanctity of the holy of holies. Happily that is a thing of the past, although it is not a pleasant episode to reflect upon.

We may say at once that this latest addition to the growing list of text books is by members of the Islington Public Libraries Staff in collaboration—a melancholy interest attaching to the "Introduction" by the late James Duff Brown. For the rest, Mr. J. D. Stewart deals in a thoroughly practical way in three of the nine chapters on Planning and Equipment; Classification, Shelf Guiding, and Special Rules are dealt with by Messrs. Henry T. Coutts and William McGill, and Charging-Systems by the Misses Alice Jones and Olive E. Clarke, are considered in the remaining six chapters.

That practical commonsense view of the practical side of library administration which has in the past always distinguished the working of the Islington Public Libraries is evident on every page, even although, for some reasons, we should have preferred a less rigid adherence to the "family" plan of authorship adopted. To the librarian deep in the throes of organisation, this book should be of inestimable worth. There are some 20 full page illustrations including typical plans, with about 40 smaller illustrations of detail. The book is a handy size, while the printing is bold and agreeable, but the fly in the ointment is the price. It is a matter of regret that it was necessary to issue the volume at a cost which will, in our opinion, effectually put it out of the range of 75 per cent. of the profession, even admitting that the fault is one common to all text books on library economy. For a volume of 223 somewhat small pages with large print and a goodly sprinkling of illustrations, seven and sixpence net is prohibitive. With this reservation all is excellent, and we cordially commend this practical work of up-to-date methods in the open access system.

H.G.S.

CHANGES AND APPOINTMENTS.

GRAVETT, Mrs. NETTIE K., who will be remembered by many as a cultured member of the last L.A.A. Easter School, has been appointed Superintendent of the Travelling Library of the Ohio State Library. Formerly Mrs. Gravett was State Librarian in Colorado.

BESSANT, Miss GERTRUDE, has been appointed an Assistant, Winchester Public Library.

WYATT, Miss MAY, has been appointed an Assistant, Winchester Public Library.

The following changes have taken place recently on the staff of the Bolton Public Libraries:—

BLACKBURN, W., has been appointed Junior Assistant.

GIFFORD, J. D., Assistant-in-Charge, Mere Hall Branch, has been transferred to Great Lever Branch.

HILL, J. A., has been appointed Junior Assistant.

MEAKINS, H., has been appointed Junior Assistant.

SEFTON, F., has been appointed Junior Assistant.

SLINGER, G., has been promoted to the Senior Staff.

SMITH, W., has been promoted to be Assistant-in-Charge, Mere Hall Branch.